

## **REMARKS**

Claims 1-14 were presented for examination and were pending in this application. In the latest Office Action, claims 1-14 were rejected. With this amendment, claims 1-14 are canceled, and new claims 15-44 are added. On the basis of the following remarks, consideration of this application and allowance of all pending claims are requested.

In the latest Office Action, the previously pending claims were rejected as unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,915,008 to Dulman in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,940,598 to Strauss et al. Although the cancellation of claims 1-14 moots this rejection, to advance prosecution of this application a brief discussion of why the new claims are patentable over Dulman in view of Strauss is provided below.

In particular, the claimed invention enables connecting a plurality of communication sessions (each session associated with a customer premises equipment) to a particular service provider over a single virtual connection established between an ATM node and the service provider. The virtual connection may be switched or permanent, and the ATM node may comprise an access server function (ASF). As the specification explains, at page 4, lines 17-25, this claimed feature saves a considerable number of virtual connections in comparison with the prior art solutions. For example, a typical network scenario has a large number of customer premises equipment (CPE) and a relatively fewer number of service providers and ASFs that connect the CPE to the service providers. Rather than having to establish a virtual connection for each combination of CPE and service provider, as in the prior art, the claimed invention allows connectivity by establishing as few as one virtual connection for each combination of ASF and service provider. This claimed feature is not enabled by Dulman, Strauss, or any combination thereof.

Based on the foregoing, the application is in condition for allowance of all claims, and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the examiner believes for any reason direct contact would help advance the prosecution of this case to allowance, the examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned at the number given below.

Respectfully submitted,  
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NYMAN

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